

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 13571

USIA FOR IBS/PS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US, XO

SUBJ: SOVIET MEDIA COVERAGE OF U.S.

1. SUMMARY: SOVIET MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE US HAS TOUGHENED SLIGHTLY IN THE PAST WEEK, WITH MOST POINTED CRITICISM DIRECTED AT US ACTIONS RELATING TO CYPRUS ISSUE(SEPTEL). US ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES CONTINUE TO RECEIVE HEAVY PLAY, AS DO US PLANS FOR EXPANSION OF DIEGO GARCIA. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS WHICH PORTRAY US IN UNFAVORABLE LIGHT HAVE INCREASED IN NUMBER AS WELL.

2. AT SAME TIME, THE MEDIA CONTINUE TO STRESS IMPORTANCE OF US-SOVIET BILATERAL RELATIONS AND REPEATEDLY REFER TO FIRM FOUNDATION CREATED FOR THESE RELATIONS BY
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SUMMITS AND BY PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENTS INDICATING HE WILL FOLLOW POLICY LINE AIMED AT FURTHER IMPORVEMENT

IN BILATERAL RELATIONS.) MEDIA PLAY ON THE PRESIDENT CONTINUES TO BE FAVORABLE. IN CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR, HOWEVER USA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR ARBATOV CAUTIONED THAT PRESIDENT'S TATEMENTS STRESSING US STRENGHT ARE NOT RECIEVED WITH FAVOR BY SOME MEMBERS OF SOVIET HIERARCHY. END SUMMARY.

3. IN ADDITION TO CIRITICISM OF US ON CYPRUS ISSUE (SEPTTEL), SOVIET MEDIA HAVE STRESSED CONTINUING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES OF THE WEST, INCLUDING THOSE OF THE US. THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT THAT INFLATION IS NOW THE NATION'S NUMBER ONE PROBLEM HAS RECEIVED REPEATED PLAY, AND INITIAL MEETINGS LEADING UP TO ECONOMIC SUMMIT HAVE BEEN RECEIVING COVERAGE IN THAT LIGHT. OTHER ARTICLES HAVE POINTED TO SLUMPING US HOUSING INDUSTRY AND EFFECT OF THIS ON ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES. DURING PAST WEEK PRAVDA CAME UP WITH OBLIGATORY PERIODIC PIECE ON WORSENING CONDITION OF US POOR, AND A PRAVDA COMMENTARY NOTED THAT THE SMALLER US GRAIN CROP TO BE EXPECTED THIS YEAR IS CAUSING DIFFICULTIES NOT ONLY FOR THE US BUT ALSO FOR OTHER NATIONS USUALLY SUPPLIED BY THE US. SEPTEMBER ISSUE USA MAGAZINE REPORTS IN DETAIL NEGATIVE DISCUSSION AT JOINT USA INSTITUTE/ IMEMO SYMPOSIUM ON US ECONOMY.

4. DIEGO GARCIA CONTINUES TO RECEIVE MEDIA CRITICISM, THOUGH MOST OFTEN SUCH CRITICISM IS REPLAY FROM THIRD COUNTRY SOURCES -- USUALLY INDIAN OCEAN RIPARIAN STATES. DIEGO GARCIA CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF FAVORITE TOPICS FOR CARTOONS, RANKING SECOND AFTER THE CHILEAN JUNTA.

5. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS WHICH PORTRAY THE US IN AN UNFAVORABLE LIGHT ARE LEGION. AMONG THEM: A JAPANESE PARLIAMENTARIAN ACCUSES US OF MAKING DRY ATOMIC BOMBING RUNS OVER OKINAWA; A NYT CALL (AN ADVERTISEMENT?) FOR REINING IN THE "REPRESSIVE" FBI; THE KILLING OF A COAL MINER DURING A STRIKE; NEW YORK CITY UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES; "AN EPIDEMIC OF SUICIDES" AMONG YOUNG IN THE US; PLANS BY THE KKK TO NOMINATE A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT; A SERIES OF ARITICLES ON RACIAL DISTURBANCES IN
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NEWARK; NARCOTICS ADDICTION OF US TROOPS IN EUROPE; AND A LONGISH PIECE ON EVEL KNIEVEL -- "SUICIDE FOR DOLLARS". INDEED, DURING THE PAST WEEK ONLY ONE CENTRAL PRESS ARTICLE GIVING UNAMBIGUOUSLY FAVORABLE COVERAGE TO THE US WAS NOTED -- A PIECE PRAISING THE SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEATTLE AND TASHKENT AND THE PERSPECTIVES FOR US-USSR COOPERATION EXEMPLIFIED BY THIS RELATIONSHIP.

6. ON THE PLUS SIDE, PRAVDA POLITICAL OBSERVER YURIY ZHUKOV, IN A TELEVISION APPEARANCE ON AUGUST 31,

EMPHASIZED THAT THE TRANSITION IN THE WHITE HOUSE WILL HAVE NO EFFECT ON CONTINUITY OF US POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION. HE STRESSED THAT HIGH LEVEL AGREEMENTS REACHED DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS ARE BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS, NOT LEADERS, AND ARE UNAFFECTED BY THE CHANGE IN US LEADERSHIP. HE EXPLICITLY REFUTED THE THEORY THAT THE NIXON RESIGNATION WAS BROUGHT ABOUT BY PRESSURE FROM ANTI-DETENTE FORCES, STATING THAT PURELY INTERNAL FACTORS WERE THE CAUSE. HE DID WARN THAT ANTI-DETENTE SENTIMENT IS STILL STORNG IN SOME CIRCULES IN THE WEST, INCLUDNG THE US, AND CALLED FOR CONTINUING VIGILANCE AGAINST THESE FORCES.

7. THE MEDIA CONTINUE TO AVOID NEGATIVE COVERAGE OF THE PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT CONCERNING SOVIET INDIAN OCEAN BASES WAS ASCRIBED TO "AMERICANS" OR TO THE PENTAGON WHEN THE PRESS PRINTED ITS DENIALS OF THE STATEMENT. ZHUKOV INFORMED HIS VIEWERS THAT THE PRESIDENT IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE HENRY FORD FAMILY,AND, THOUGH NOT A POOR MAN, HE IS NO MILLIONAIRE. ZHUKOV SPOKE FAVORABLE OF THE PRESIDENT'S EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF MFN, NOTING THAT THEY WERE AMONG THE FIRST INITIATIVES HE TOOK AFTER BECOMING PRESIDENT.

8. THE EDITOR OF THE USA INSTITUTE JOURNAL, V.M. BEREZHKOVA, WRITES WITH IMPLICIT APPROVAL IN THE LEAD ARTICLE OF THE LATEST ISSUE THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS REPEATED AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY HIS INTENTION TO CONTINUE PREVIOUS US POLICY VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET UNION. BEREZHKOVA COMMENTS FAVORABLY ON THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO RETAIN DR. KISSINGER AS SECRETARY OF STATE AND ON HIS SUPPORT OF MFN. A FURTHER ARTICLE IN THE SAME JOURNAL
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(BY G.A. TROFIMENKO; SEE SEPTTEL) DISCUSSES STATEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT AND BY THE SECRETARY AND CONCLUDES THAT "ONE CAN CONSEQUENTLY COUNT ON THE FURTHER POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS."

9. IN PRIVATE COMMENTS TO THE AMBASSADOR BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE, HOWEVER, USA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR GEORGIY ARBATOV SAID THAT HIS INSTITUTE "WAS NOT ALL THAT REASSURED" BY THE PRESIDENT'S VOTING RECORD IN CONGRESS; AND THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE SOVIET HIERARCHY LOOKED ASKANCE AT THE PRESIDENT'S CONSTANT STRESS ON US STRENGTH. WHEN THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT HE HAD SEEN NOTHING IN THE MEDIA ALONG SUCH LINES, ARBATOV REPLIED THAT THAT WAS TURE, AND IN WOULD CONTINUE TO BE THE CASE.
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